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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 002239

SIPDIS

NSC FOR CBARTON  
HQ USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
USAID DCHA/OTI FOR RPORTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/25/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: DIVISIONS BETWEEN PROYECTO VENEZUELA AND CD

Classified By: A/DCM ABELARDO A. ARIAS FOR REASONS 1.4 (d)

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) The Coordinadora Democratica in Carabobo is divided over the actions of Proyecto Venezuela, according to local party leaders who talked to PolOffs on July 8 and 9. Leaders of several parties complained that Proyecto Venezuela was not participating enthusiastically in the recall referendum campaign. They also claimed that Proyecto Venezuela President Henrique Salas Roemer is more interested in campaigning for the presidency than participating in the recall effort. Nonetheless, the local Coordinadora Democratica leaders predicted a win for the recall in Carabobo. Proyecto Venezuela National Assembly Deputy Pedro Diaz Blum agreed that Proyecto Venezuela is orienting its recall propaganda around an eventual Salas presidential run. End Summary.

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Anger in the CD  
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2. (C) Representatives from COPEI, Accion Democratica, Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), and Movimiento Trabajo in Carabobo state complained about the lack of cooperation of Proyecto Venezuela in the recall referendum drive in talks with PolOffs July 8 and 9. Lucio Herrera, head of the Coordinadora Democratica in Carabobo, and regional head of COPEI, asserted that Proyecto Venezuela is not participating enthusiastically in the campaign. Not sending high level people to the Coordinadora Democratica meetings in Carabobo makes it impossible for Proyecto Venezuela to participate in Coordinadora decisions, he said. Herrera pointed out that Proyecto Venezuela has the most resources in the state, due to its long control of the state government. Herrera said parties such as Accion Democratica and Movimiento Trabajo are taking a strong line against Proyecto Venezuela for its failure to assume its responsibilities in Carabobo. Herrera said Proyecto Venezuela had failed to fulfill the responsibilities the Coordinadora gave it during the appeals process leaving many sites abandoned. He said that in the referendum, all parties would be involved in the running of all the electoral sites, in part to keep an eye on Proyecto Venezuela.

3. (C) Francisco Gonzalez and Francisco Bello, regional leaders of the Movimiento Trabajo repeated Herrera's complaints. Bello said the failure of Proyecto Venezuela to meet its responsibilities forced other parties to make up the difference, which put serious pressure on their finances. Gonzalez said Henrique Salas Roemer was running for President instead of supporting the referendum, in violation of the Coordinadora's strategy to make the referendum Chavez vs. Chavez. The local Accion Democratica leadership, and a local MAS leader also echoed the complaints.

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Salas Responds  
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4. (C) Salas told PolOffs that he did not believe the opposition could defeat Chavez in the referendum without an alternative candidate. Salas said he thinks there is only a 20% chance Chavez would be defeated, and a 60% chance there would be no referendum or the result would not be recognized. Salas said Proyecto Venezuela had conducted a poll in one million households to see their receptivity to a presidential campaign by him. He reported only 25% rejection, leading him to believe the referendum will do better with a candidate. He said his success running Carabobo, and the need to move beyond Caracas to find a candidate, made him a logical choice.

5. (C) Proyecto Venezuela Deputy Pedro Diaz Blum said Proyecto Venezuela referendum propaganda would be presidential campaign material for Salas because the proposed

primaries are one week after the referendum. Presuming that

Miranda state Gov. Mendoza would be the prime candidate, Diaz Blum said he believed Salas would run if the Coordinadora did not agree to a primary election process to choose the candidate. Diaz said the Coordinadora's message to the poor, that they had to get rid of Chavez, was bound to fail. He said Chavez was the only person who had given poor people anything, and the opposition had to try to co-opt his programs, not take him on head on. He admitted that Salas' biggest problem was his difficult personality.

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MVR POV  
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16. (C) PolOffs spoke with MVR Regional Coordinator Felipe Medina July 8. Medina called Proyecto Venezuela a "state bureaucracy at the service of a personal dynasty." He said that Proyecto Venezuela's power in Carabobo could not be under-estimated, and that the opposition would be strong. He said he had never seen the "people" so enthusiastic, and said there was no way Chavez could lose the referendum. If he did lose, it would be fraud, which might lead to violence. There might also be violence if the opposition refused to recognize a Chavez victory, he said.

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CNE Ready  
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17. (C) Javier Armas, head of the National Electoral Council in Carabobo, told PolOffs that the timeline for getting the voting and fingerprint machines ready, closing the electoral rolls, and setting up the voting centers was tight, but that he thought everything would be ready. He reported that the new voting centers being set up are only for people who have never been registered, or who have asked to be moved. Other voting centers will be split into two or more centers, but they will be within blocks of each other. He said CANTV had wired the voting centers, though there was only one Smartmatic machine in Carabobo on July 9. He reported 84 machines would arrive the week of July 12.

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Comment  
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18. (C) The dispute between Proyecto Venezuela and the Coordinadora Democratica does not appear to be a serious threat to the recall referendum in Carabobo. Salas and Proyecto Venezuela will work for the referendum, but for Salas it will be in his own manner, and for his own benefit as well.  
McFarland

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